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SUBMITTED TESTIMONY OF  
BILL CONNORS  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & COO  
ON BEHALF OF THE  
NATIONAL BUSINESS TRAVEL ASSOCIATION  
BEFORE THE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC SECURITY,  
INFRASTRUCTURE PROTECTION & CYBERSECURITY  
“THE PROMISE OF REGISTERED TRAVELER”  
JUNE 9, 2005



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Good morning Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee, I am honored to testify before you today. I appreciate the opportunity to present the views and concerns of the customer at today's very important hearing on the Registered Traveler Program. My name is Bill Connors, and I am the Executive Director & COO of the National Business Travel Association (NBTA).

The National Business Travel Association is the authoritative voice of the business travel community, representing more than 2,500 corporate travel managers and travel service providers who collectively manage and direct more than \$170 billion of expenditures within the business travel industry, primarily for *Fortune 1000* companies.

NBTA believes in strong, effective travel security that does not place unnecessary burdens on travelers. We believe that there are technological possibilities that would allow the more than 6 million frequent business travelers a more rapid screening process. As such, we have been a strong supporter of the Registered Traveler concept for over three years.

NBTA has participated in the Registered Traveler openings at airports in Minneapolis, Boston and Washington, DC. In addition, I, myself, am a member of the Registered Traveler pilot program here at Reagan National Airport.

We are currently experiencing a return of business travel to levels seen in 2000. The dip in business travel began with the downturn in the economy, and it was exacerbated by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 and other world events. The business travel slump continued into 2003, with security concerns and the "hassle factor" having negative impacts, along with economic conditions. We saw the beginnings of a recovery in 2003 and into 2004, and that recovery continues today.

Concerns about safety/security, and the impact of security procedures on travel have changed booking patterns. For example, more companies are using corporate jets and charters than ever before. That trend continues today, for most companies, time and value issues are second only to safety concerns. In 2002, 26% of companies were using corporate jets and charters. In 2004, that number had grown to 33%, and a recent NBTA online poll indicates that trend continues.

In another NBTA survey conducted in 2004, 48% of members stated that the security hassle at airports is a factor that is hurting the U.S. business travel climate. In another survey done jointly between NBTA and the Travel Industry Association released early in 2005, 53% of members stated that they would like to participate in a pay Registered Traveler program.

It is therefore no surprise that business travelers and corporate travel managers are strong supporters of programs like Registered Traveler, which would speed the process at airports, and offer voluntary participation. Travel security can be both effective and efficient. Providing business travelers the option of strong, expedited screening will help make our businesses, our economy and our country even stronger.



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As I stated previously, NBTA has supported the Registered Traveler Program since the pilot program was rolled out, and we applaud the Department of Homeland Security, the Transportation Security Administration, and all of the airlines and airports involved in the Registered Traveler Pilot Program for their efforts to improve the security screening process. NBTA would also strongly encourage those who are responsible for managing this program to make it permanent and nationally available.

NBTA is encouraged by expansion of the program to include a private sector option. The Known Passenger Program in Orlando will offer the first large-scale test of the Registered Traveler concept. If successful we encourage TSA to offer similar programs to travelers around the country as soon as possible, if the program proves to expedite the screening process while ensuring the security of the entire system.

As a member of the Registered Traveler Pilot program here at Reagan National Airport, I can tell you from experience that the program is currently a welcome opportunity for registered users here in DC. Having used the system on several occasions myself here at Reagan airport, I have been a satisfied customer. It is hard to say how the program here at DCA has performed with limited participation, but based on my experiences, we would be happy to see the program expanded dramatically.

I would like all of you to know, from the perspective of someone who hears from the business travel community daily, and is responsible for bringing their views to you here today, that it has been a good beginning. Now I would urge you, as quickly and efficiently as possible, to build on that foundation to enable every airport around the county to offer this service to its frequent travelers.

It's time we allowed all and frequent travelers who wish to participate in the Registered Traveler Program to do so. We need to safely facilitate the healthy conduct of commerce in this county, which only serves to make our economy stronger, and our nation more secure.

Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to come before you today and provide the views of the business travelers, corporate travel managers and travel service providers. The National Business Travel Association would be more than willing to serve in an advisory capacity on any and all issues related to passenger screening and the Registered Traveler Program. On a broader level, NBTA would recommend the establishment of an advisory group to liaise with all government agencies working to make our transportation system as efficient and safe as possible.

Thank you.